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ANDRÉ MASSON

NOVEMBER 1973

At 789 Madison Avenue, New York

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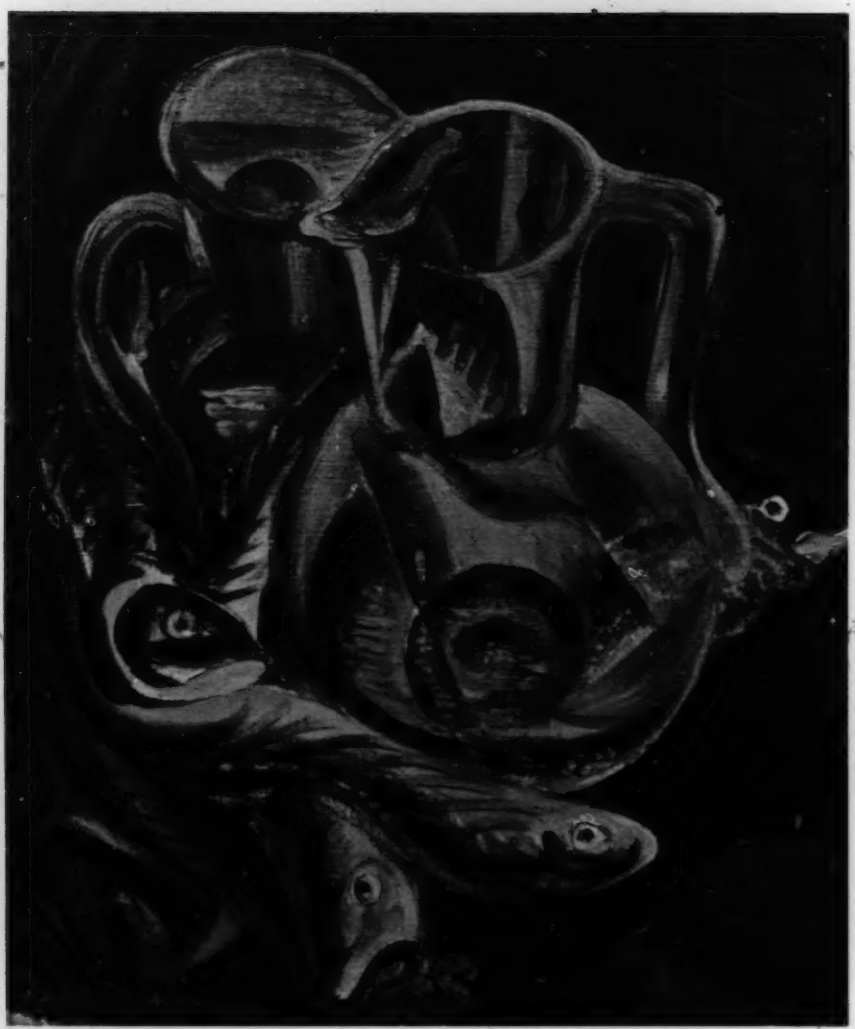


1. Carafe et poissons, oil, 1923

The Surrealist Impulse

André Masson began in 1923 to organize his paintings in a systematic manner. He was doing still-life painting often utilizing fish and glass; modified still-lifes with people eating or playing cards; and landscapes of forests. The common element of these paintings is motion—achieved by a combination of curvature (of fish, arms or branches) and the juxtaposition of elements such as fishes' eyes seen through glass, arms and hands placed to give the illusion of almost being disjointed, and leaves or bushes being filled in among branches as contrasting shapes. The motion achieved by these techniques is always contained by still elements: by

2. Les poissons, oil, 1923

3. Composition (Constellation), charcoal, 1926

wood planes of a table in the still-lifes; by shoulders in the modified still-lifes; and by tree trunks and ground in the landscapes. In an early still-life of 1922 reflecting this inclination, Masson painted an actual frame on the canvas. Masson's use of a structure to contain the central motion of his paintings, particularly in the pure still-lifes, is reminiscent of the planes utilized in Cubism, but its function is completely different.

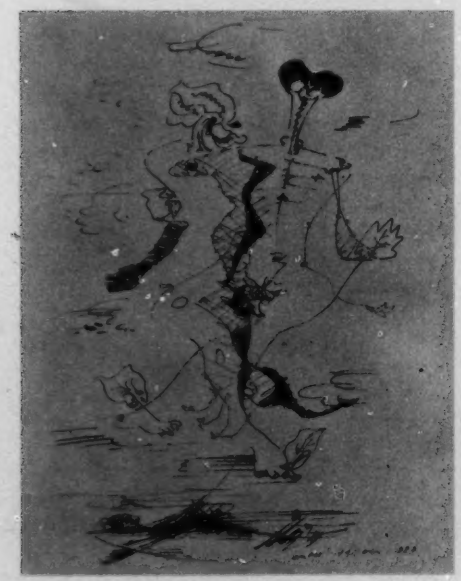
Masson began a painting in 1923 which he finished in 1924, *Les Quatre Eléments*. This painting is the synthesis of the still-lifes, combining disembodied hands and objects but introducing thereby a symbolic element. This was the first painting André Breton bought from Masson and perhaps it was that symbolic element that moved Masson into the mainstream of the Surrealist milieu. From then on his paintings frequently contained symbolic elements—a tomb, a saw juxtaposed with a woman—and always with a surrounding structure, more and more architectural. By 1925 he added a new dimension to his architectural enclosures which to the undiscerning eye appears cubistic. In reality the multiplicity of planes in these paintings is the result of arbitrary light and shadow on simple though juxtaposed architectural fragments.

4. Automatic drawing, ink, 1925

5. Automatic drawing, ink, 1926

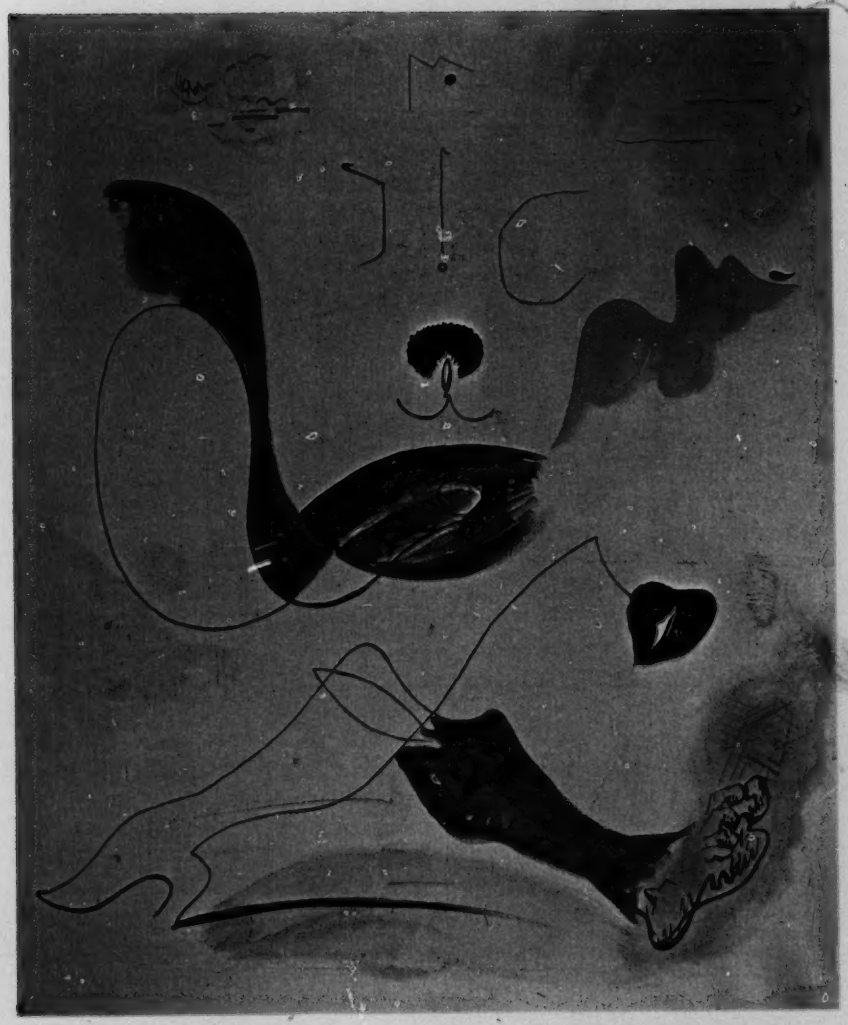
But these technical details are hardly the essence of his paintings of this period. It is motion again which is at the core of them. As Masson took an active part in the Surrealist group, he introduced the automatic ink drawing, reportedly done so quickly sometimes that he hardly saw the lines he was making. The automatic impulses responsible for these drawings were the result of psychic forces according to Surrealist theory. In Masson it must have been such psychic forces which began manifesting themselves through the motion found in the paintings of 1923. In 1924, works such as *Nus et Architecture* are composed of architectural structures surrounding a core of graphic figures. This graphism reflects in the paintings the automatism found in his drawings of the time, although the greater speed with which a drawing can be executed makes it more purely automatic and more complex.

Masson's automatic drawings appeared frequently in Breton's review, *La Révolution Surréaliste*, and focused attention on this aspect of Masson's work in which he was regarded as the master. The dominating aspect of these drawings was metamorphic, the constant changing of linear direction suggesting first one form, then another. As a psychic inclination, met-



6. Métamorphose, ink, 1927

7. Automatic drawing, ink, 1927



8. Scène érotique, oil, 1928

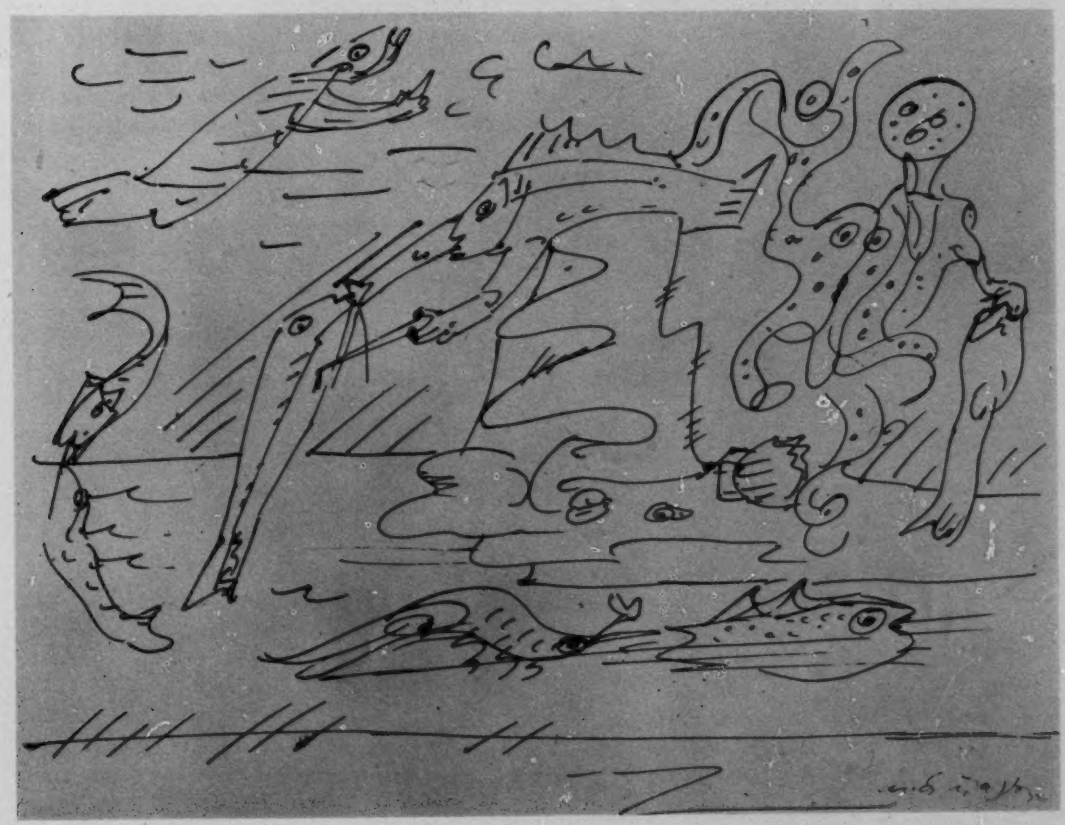
amorphosis for Masson fused his automatic drawing technique with his philosophic viewpoint, for the violence and eroticism he began depicting was essentially the changing from one state to another. In some drawings and paintings and his first sculpture, pure metamorphosis is the subject.

This metamorphic principle also seemed to guide Masson's own development. The graphism he had introduced into his paintings of 1924, which were a transformation of the volumetric motion of the still-lifes and forests, was intensified beginning in 1926. The enclosures which previously seemed so important to Masson began to disappear, replaced by large flat planes. Then in 1927 at the seaside, Masson discovered a means to apply automatism to a canvas. With a glue base he was able to lay down sand on the canvas quickly, coming upon those shapes he liked as if from his subconscious. On the sand structure he created he then rapidly drew with paint from a tube to add both color and line. Masson made only twenty or so sand paintings: "...I saw that sand painting could become a routine and that it was necessary to look for other means to give birth to forms from the unconscious." Indeed he found other means. He had often left bare canvas in the sand paintings and he explored this concept without sand in a series of paintings in 1927-28 that are minimal in paint and very automatic. Continuing in a logical progression even though away from automatism, Masson then restored full color in 1928-29 by the device of square and triangular fields of color over which he again imposed a graphic design reminiscent of the automatic impulse. He further varied this idea replacing the fields with color forms which complemented his graphic subject.

During the 1920s, Masson's life wasn't serene. He had been gravely wounded in World War I and bore the psychological effects of having been in the assault troops where death was ever present. His first marriage during these years ended unhappily, and he was frequently in a violent emotional state. On the other hand, Masson was considered extraordinarily well read and his studio was frequently an intellectual and social meeting place, facts which indicated that his subconscious trials were in control. At first he eschewed subjects that were not outwardly calm, but gradually a dark philosophical element began to enter his work. Pointedly the theory of the automatic drawing encouraged the outpouring of unconscious drives in graphic form and the very fury of his drawn line mirrors Masson's state of mind at the time. Thus the appearance of cemeteries in paintings of 1924, of men trapped in underground chambers, was followed by cruel, violent and erotic combinations such as the saws and women of 1925, then by birds caught in traps, dead creatures, combats, butcherings and devourings of animals, and finally the massacres of women which continued to 1934. While this run of what could be termed subconsciously oriented subjects was tempered by less violent works, they made Masson, especially with his automatic inclinations, the artist most significantly within the surrealist image.

The Massacres and Spain

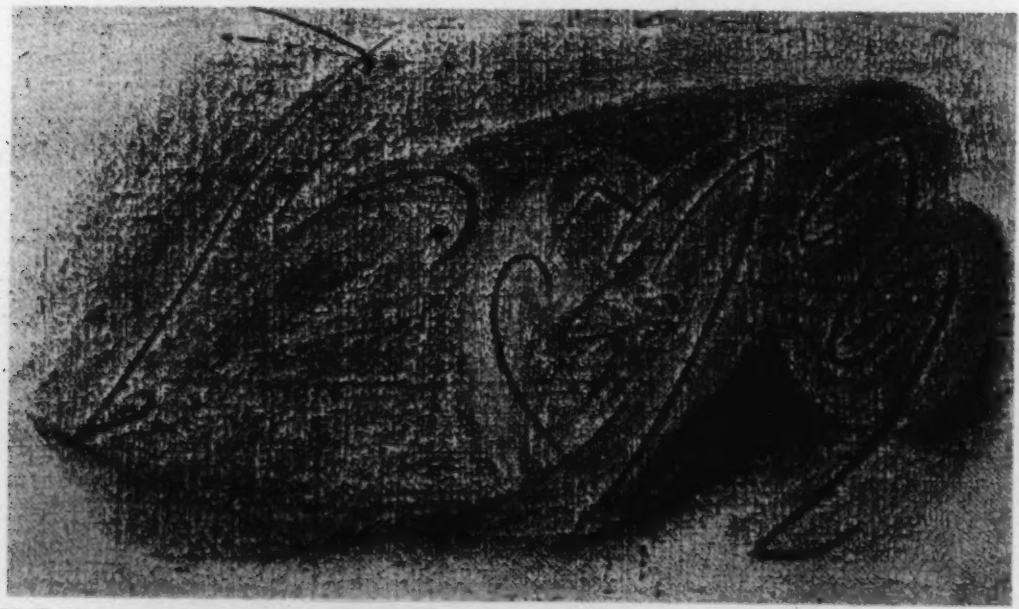
Masson removed himself from the Surrealist group in 1929, changed galleries in 1931, went to live in Grasse in 1932 and left France for Spain in 1934. This restlessness did not affect the continuity of his work, however, for the dark themes which were already in it continued into his remarkable series of drawings and paintings on the theme of Massacres. In 1928,



9. Combat de poissons, ink, 1928

Masson had slowly painted a large work, *Grand Combat de Poissons*. Unlike his other combats, this showed fish fighting each other with knives. It was organized very much like the massacres he began in 1931. But the massacres were unlike the combat of fishes: instead they were uniquely men stabbing women and served, beyond their superb execution, as the culmination of Masson's pent-up emotions concerning violence and eroticism.

He preceded the massacres with paintings of pursued and tormented women, and in fact the entire configuration of these ideas was reflecting a spiritual crisis underlain perhaps by the violent experiences on the battlefield but more immediately by personal relationships. Beyond this, however, was an intellectual knowledge concerning the emotions he was feeling. Masson and his friend Georges Bataille had begun in the late 1920s to investigate the "dark" Greek myths, dark because they dealt precisely with violence and eroticism. Again a coincidence of mythical and personal experience must have helped generate in Masson the ability to construct these powerful works.



10. Etude pour le Combat d'animaux, pastel on canvas, 1929

11. Le faune, oil; 1932

In 1932 he was taken by the idea of sacrifices ("the gods who die") for which Bataille wrote a text. Orpheus seemed to fascinate him of the five subjects for which he engraved illustrations in 1933 (published in 1936), perhaps because Orpheus alone died an erotically inspired violent death and was the only artist among the others—Mithra, Osiris, the Minotaur and the Crucified One. Later, the myth of the Minotaur which had particularly concerned Masson and Bataille became the basis for many paintings and drawings treating Pasiphaë, Theseus and Ariadne and their relationship to the concept of the deadly Minotaur in his labyrinth.

Masson's fascination with Greek mythology was not for the purpose of illustrating it but to illuminate the subconscious drives which he evidently perceived in himself and in humanity with greater intensity than the myths themselves explained. As he was completing the thrust of his Massacres, Masson switched to Bacchanales, structuring them as he had the Massacres. Thus men, instead of wielding daggers, fed women dagger-shaped clusters of grapes foreshadowing an erotic rather than a violent orgy. (He had also seized upon a similar correspondance with harvests, in which field hands wielded scythes.) Masson completed some other

Drame, drypoint, 1932

L'homme au couteau, drypoint, 1933

12. Massacre dans un champ, oil, 1933

mythical works, but his decision to go to Spain focused his attention away from the abstract ideas embodied in myths and more towards the realities of each day's living.

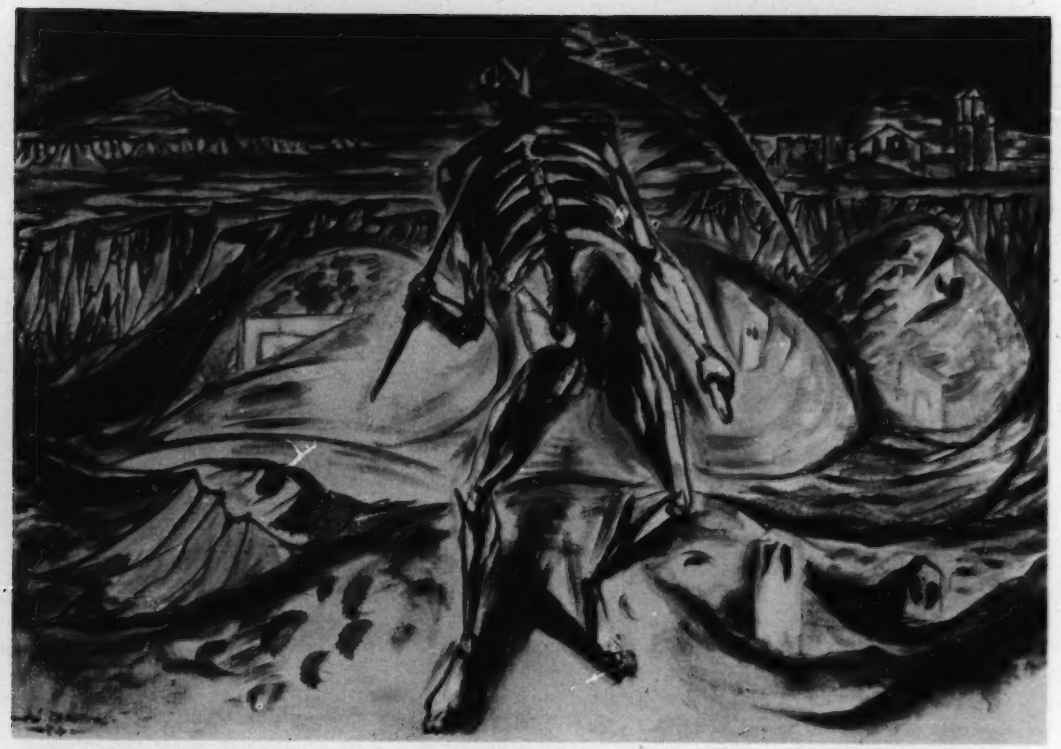
Spain provided Masson with a new set of stimuli coming from natural surroundings. The dusty earth, tilled by men so thin their skeletons seemed visible, the brilliant southern skies, the heroics and the mysticism of the Spanish culture attracted Masson. In Grasse he had painted some natural studies of foliage and developed those skeletonized field hands in paintings which related to or perhaps inspired the Massacres. These inclinations were explored in Spain, even though they were always transformed with surreal impact. An ass becomes a phantom with Avila as a backdrop; the hard life of Guadix makes the field hands almost rise from sepulchers rather than till the land, the Spanish evening sky imposes a mystical and enchanted quality upon the earthly landscape.

Masson's eye close to the grass perceived another theme which was to stay with him for many years—the life of plants and of man: germination. He also observed insects in this affinity for nature and formulated a brilliant surreal idea of anthropomorphized insect society engaged in diversions, corteges, balls. But the urge of violence which had seemed still in Masson during his Spanish sojourn was actually in fertile soil. The bullfight provided him with the purely Spanish version of the violent Minotaur and also gave him a setting to explore once more the rhythms of writhing animal and human bodies. Finally the advent of the Spanish Civil War confirmed the misery he had seen between the ribs of the farmers he painted. It also put an end to whatever tranquility he had begun to enjoy and directed his emotions once more to the violent. The form this time was a brilliant series of mystical and bitter satirical drawings which began with *La Nouvelle Hostie* before he left at the end of 1936 and terminated with his prophetic etching for Paul Eluard's *Solidarité*, in a 1938 album to aid orphans of the war.

Battements, etching, 1933

Orphée, etching, 1933

13. Orphée, oil, 1934



14. Guadix, oil, 1934

An ocean of sulphur mounts the somber earth. In the meadow the weeds are signs of fire. The forest bursts into geysers of sap. The incandescent rocks are diamonds of the hour. The furious gallop of the saturnal wind changes a tomb into a sheaf of dust. A vomit of lead un-

15. La nouvelle hostie, ink, 1936

dulates on the terrace of temples, covers up the earth, glides to the dead volcano, to the dried-up river. On the horizon a black sun oscillates for the last time: an eye veiled by a scythe which destroys this landscape of a world's end.

A.M.—Tossa de Mar, July 16, 1936

Translated by Meyer Shapiro, Anatomy of My Universe, 1943

Reunion with Surrealism

Masson's long exile from Surrealist circles ended with his return to France. He reestablished his friendship with Breton, was invited to contribute to Breton's edition of *Les Chants de Maldoror,* and took part in the International Surrealist exhibition of 1938. Masson first completed the thrust of his Spanish directions after his return, but he was dejected by the atmosphere of war that was settling over Europe. He retreated to the countryside once again rather than living in Paris and there began conceiving the most profound period of his work.

Masson was just 41 at that time and certainly this maturing time of life must have been instrumental in the philosophical inquiries he then began. As a master of drawing, it was also natural that Masson should continue to express himself for this purpose with pen and ink. Beyond his renowned automatic drawings of the 1920s, he had created the intense suite of Massacre drawings. The Spanish War had propelled him into another startling series of large drawings of deep political satire made particularly biting by their surrealistic images. Now he began his philosophical drawings, the suites Mythology of Nature, Mythology of Being and

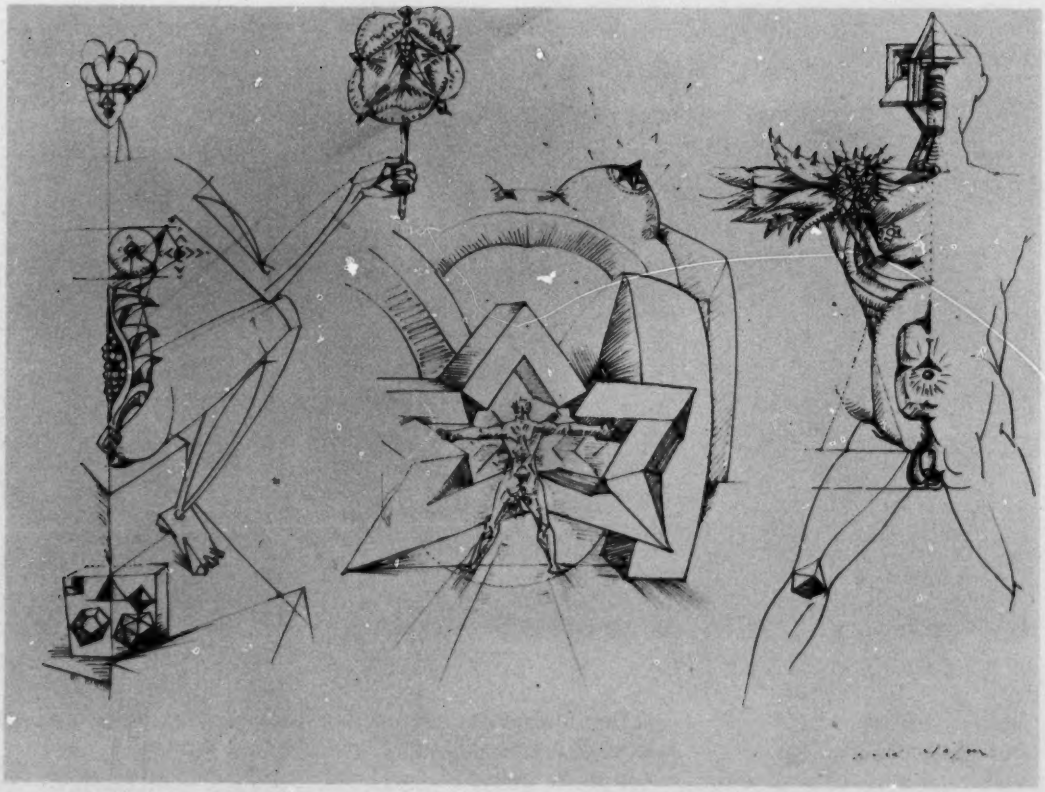
16. Hurle à la vie, ink, 1939

17. Le philosophe, ink, 1940

18. Hôtel des oiseaux. oil, 1939

finally Anatomy of My Universe. These drawings systematized those subconscious insights and motivations which Masson had been expressing automatically for so long.

His paintings correspondingly took on an intense richness and complexity both of image and execution. Not only did he plumb the final depths of his ideas concerning the Minotaur, but he concocted an incredible mythology of furniture, including the "Pianotaur." To this idea which isolated eroticism by departing from the purely human image, he added birds and insects: the two brothels he painted—*Hôtel des Oiseaux* (1939) and *Hôtel des Automates* (1941) are a fantastic amalgam of erotic furniture metamorphosed into and from birds and insects. "My paintings attained a paroxysm so expressive that they went beyond the surrealist norm fixed more so on the marvelous than on the horrible." But though Masson's paintings of this time may convey a sense of horror, they also contain the life force and are powerful plastic representations of the philosophical insights of the artist.



19. Le chiffre cinq, ink, 1940

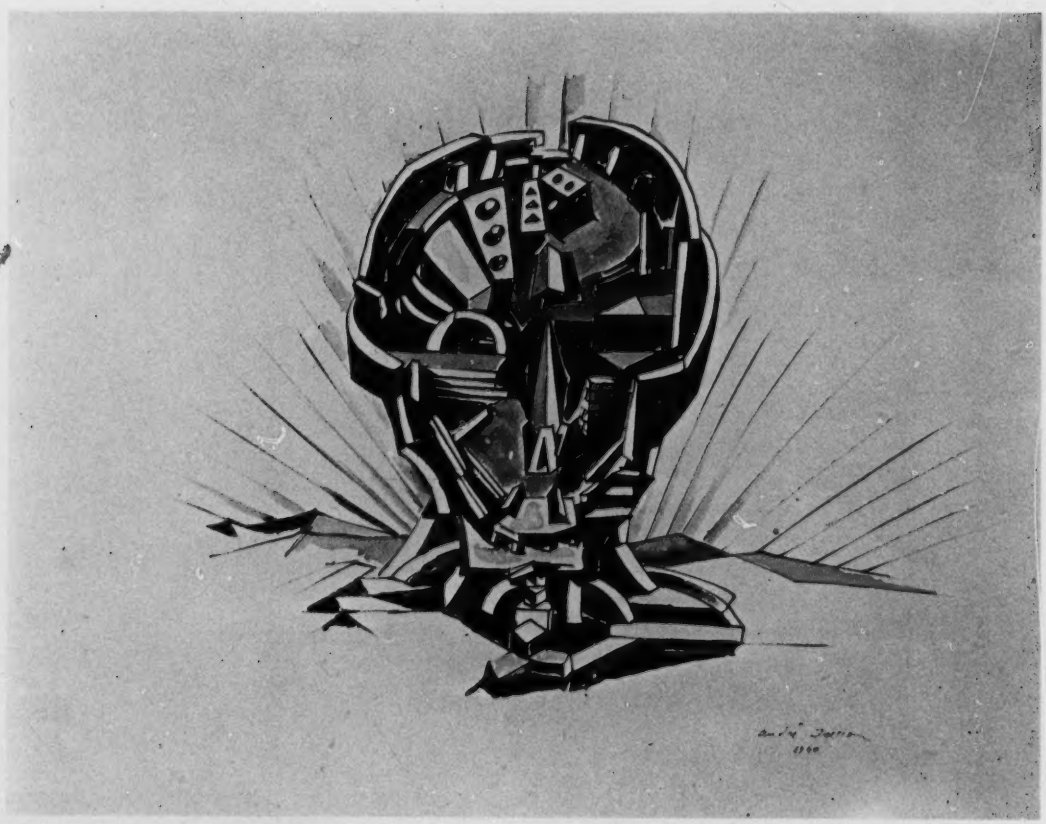
The science of numbers raises the mind to the most sublime heights, wrote Gaffarel, who was the librarian of the cardinal Richelieu, in his great work on the Kabbala.

Ariadne dreams that she is a Labyrinth . . .

A.M.—Anatomy of My Universe.

20. Le rêve d'Ariane, ink, 1941

Masson's refuge in the country at Lyons-la-Forêt allowed him what he invariably sought —contemplation in the midst of nature. For nature is finally at the core of Masson's thinking—that universal nature which encompasses both a blade of wheat and erotic violence. In Anatomy of My Universe, Masson wrote, "I buried myself in the darkness of the earth, a seed eager to burst out towards the light of day. I desired to be no more than the essence of movement at the birth of things, in order to be more fully *exterior*." Masson's *exterior* is



21. Ville cranienne, watercolor, 1940

extremely complex because, while it issues from the bursting seed, it takes on a cosmic scope. The 1939 *Métamorphoses* and its 1941 twin *Le Couple*, are seminal for this basic Masson idea: the sprouting of the swamp seed or the chrysalis into the metamorphosing couple surrounded with celestial emblems and, in *Le Couple*, the comet-like cabbalistic crystal.

Masson, whose philosophic influences are made precise in Anatomy of My Universe, veered

22. Paysage en forme de poisson, oil, 1941

toward philosophers like Heraclitus and Goethe enough to make them subjects of portraits. Masson's approach to such portraits was not analytical usually but emotional: he drew these philosophers showing the spirit in their heads rather than alluding to their specific ideas. In his drawing *Le Philosophe,* Masson invests the head modestly with two leaf-stars: it is basically a self-portrait.

23. Capricio, ink, 1941

24. Le couple, oil, 1941

25. La défaite, ink, 1942

Sojourn in America

If the imminence of World War II had an effect on Masson's paroxyism of surrealistic painting, its coming once again sent him into flight. His refuge first was Martinique, then New York, then the Connecticut countryside. The lush nature of Martinique, where he stayed for three weeks with Breton, infused him with the idea of a mythology of vegetation. Some of the remarkable drawings he made are reproduced in *Martinique Charmeuse de Serpents* which he and Breton published in 1948. In New York, the Massons and Bretons moved into an apartment house which did not suit Masson. But it was the countryside he no doubt missed. When he rented a farmhouse in Connecticut he was able to observe nature once again from the seed to the sky. But New England nature especially with its vivid autumns and clear American skies was a nature to which Masson had never been exposed. Once again Masson was on new, exciting literal ground, and once again he logically concluded the thoughts of his previous period with *Hôtel des Automates, Paysage en forme de poisson,* and *Le Couple.* Then as he had in Spain and in Lyons-la-Forêt, he began a new contemplation of nature and of the mythology of the new land.

26. La veillée, ink, c. 1943

27. Tête penchée, ink, c. 1943

In the American milieu Masson developed a rich painting style which minimized the surrealistic imagery that had dominated his work since 1938. He plumbed simple elements of nature and synthesized the colors and forms he lived among with his meditations of nature and the native Indian lore which dwelt on the same subjects. In this process his hand often wandered automatically but not furiously as in the 1920s, no longer calling forth subconscious conflicts but an inner calm that made him more at one with nature than ever before.

Nevertheless, graphism or "écriture" entered into Masson's work in a more intense man-

28. Divertissement, pastel, 1942

29. Andromède, tempera and sand on canvas board, 1943

ner than ever before. Starting in 1941 with *Enchevêtrement*, Masson composed almost the entire surface of some paintings in calligraphic brush strokes relieved only by a few areas of solid color. These strokes were basically serpentine or angular lines which thinned and thickened. Masson had employed similar effects in his automatic drawings of the 1920s but just as highlights. Now suddenly this early tendency flowered, although the more meditative paintings with large color areas predominated in his work. This calligraphic approach was to become a major preoccupation of Masson's in the 1950s, but at the time it had a profound influence on young American painters such as Jackson Pollock.

Masson also utilized this calligraphic effect in ink drawings, most notably his series of Trees (1943). He secured pieces of bamboo which he cut on the diagonal to make a pen capable of widening and narrowing his line while not impeding his speed, although he achieved a similar effect with a normal wash brush once he returned to France (and also in lithographs of 1944-45). This idea of a calligraphed painting or drawing, although the action within the work was full of surrealist dynamism, was allied to Masson's disposition to Zen, which he had considered in the early 1930s. Once back in France, he inclined to this oriental influence which had, almost subconsciously, been a major facet of his work in America.

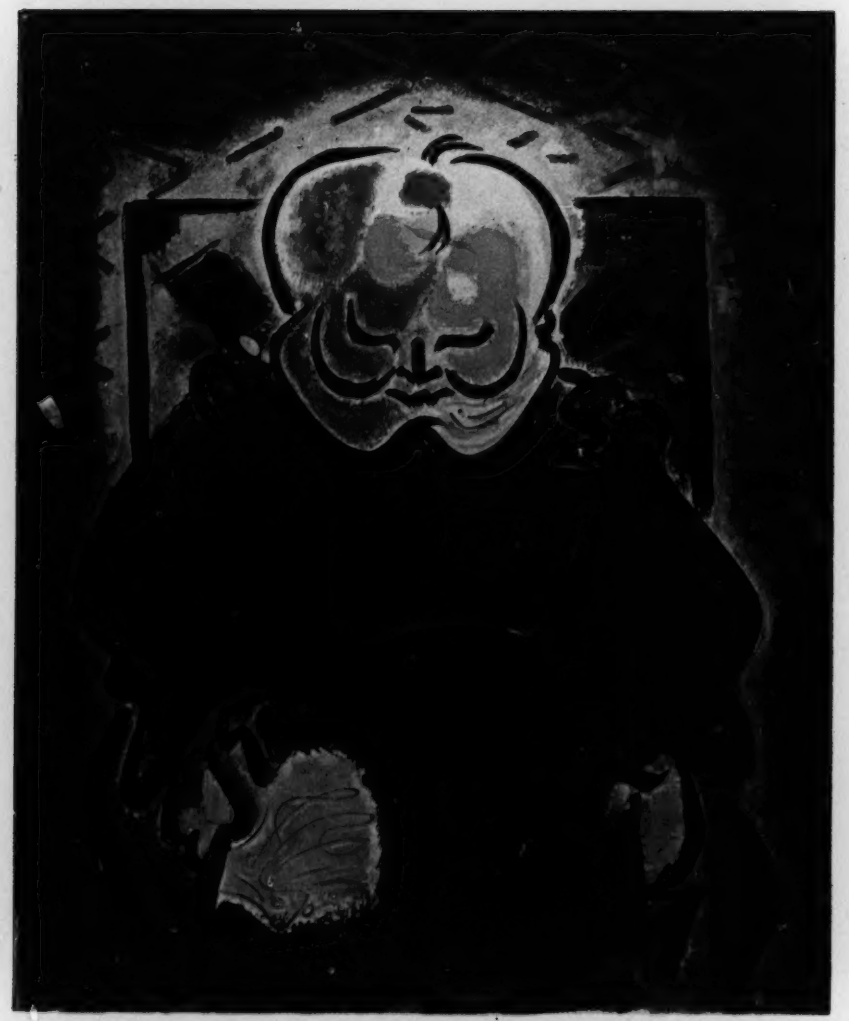
Le génie de l'espace, etching/drypoint, 1943·

Portrait de l'artiste, litho, 1944

Readjustment in France

Masson returned to France in October 1945 and went to live in a chateau at Poitiers. An old shoe lay in the moat, and Masson characteristically fastened his attention on this at once mundane yet marvelous apparition which he imbued with such a mythology that it was not until 1947 that he finished with it as a subject. Such investment of objects with an imaginary élan had always been Masson's method of treating subjects in his paintings, but at this mo-

30. Le vieux soulier, brown and red wash, 1945



31. L'enfant au livre d'images, oil, 1947

32. Libation, oil, 1947

ment in his life the strong impulse toward the imaginary from the real was creating a crisis.

Perhaps it was the moment of middle age self-searching (indeed, Masson at 50 made several self-portraits in oil) combined with a general period of change that followed the end of the war. Masson and Breton had fallen out in 1943 and Masson was writing off Surrealism

33. Voracité, oil, 1947

by 1945. He had outgrown that kind of grouping, and he failed for the first time to exhibit with the surrealists in the 1947 Galerie Maeght exhibition. Nevertheless he continued as he always had in crises of the past to conclude logically the thrust of his work of the past few years.

The exploration of large blocks of color as structural elements which grew out of the colors of the American landscape continued, with the phosphorescent effect created with tempera over a bistre or black background being replaced by a thickening of paint. The large paintings *Niobe* and *Paysanne s'apprêtant à tuer un lapin* in this technique were finished in 1947, the last of Masson's works associated with the American period. At the same time, surrealist themes such as *Voracité*, based on a charcoal drawing of 1941, culminated in a painting rather than being discarded.

The creative crisis that was building in Masson came to a head with an outpouring of large drawings on the theme of desire—twenty executed in the course of one day in 1947. Masson recounts he almost sensed the ground vibrating under his feet afterwards and decided to aban-

Sisyphe, aquatint and drypoint, 1946-47

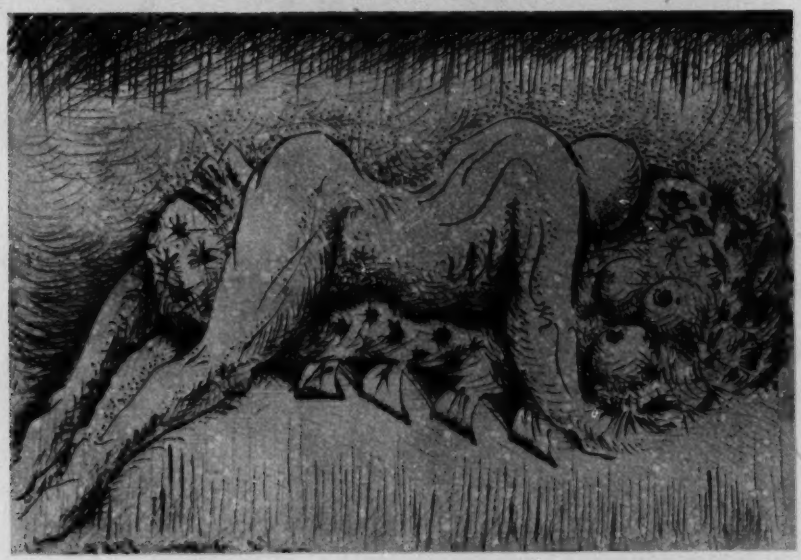
34. La grotte, oil, 1948

don the imaginary for what he could see. But it was not quite to be that, for a painting such as *La Grotte* (1948), inspired by the landscape of a quarry, nevertheless serves as a vehicle for the initiation of Hermaphroditus by Pan, and the painting of the grotto itself is certainly as hermetic as the basic grouping of figures in the center. In fact, Masson's preoccupation with the earth as a counterpoint to mystical human action started with his paintings of subterranean chambers in the 1920s, appeared in his paintings of Spain and was a key element

in his American period. Thus despite the crisis, the basic currents of Masson's lifelong tendencies continued to surface in his work, although such crises may be the impetus by which his new directions are achieved.

Masson went to live outside Aix-en-Provence in 1947, on the Route de Cézanne in plain view of the Montagne St. Victoire. This relocation, coinciding with his crisis of the imaginary and his desire to paint more things as he saw them, certainly provided him with a setting in which he could contemplate nature from the same physical point that Cézanne and the Impressionists had. This kind of retreat in habitat in order to go forward as a painter, however, was a lifelong pattern of Masson's starting from his removal from the front lines in World War I. While he chose a home near Montagne St. Victoire in 1947, he had always felt the need of nature outside the city, whether in Spain or the countryside of Paris or New York. In each instance he was able to synthesize his previous work and to discover new stimuli to continue with much the same momentum as before, always nurturing his basic automatic, subconscious, philosophical drives despite an apparent rejection of them in new surroundings.

Thus while contemplating nudes bathing, Masson can create in the *Idole* of 1948 (versus



Homme et chrysalides, drypoint and aquatint, 1947

36. L'idole, oil, 1948

35. Herbes coupées, oil, 1948

his more surrealist *Idole* of 1941) his most sensuous painting. He can see in some cut grass that hypernatural tiny world that he saw in insects and wheat fields in Spain and invest the blades and leaves with an automatic motion. But finally another tendency becomes dominant in this setting—that of oriental landscape painting. While Masson's paintings of this period reaching into the early 1950s have been characterized as Impressionist-oriented, they have in reality engaged the same natural subject matter as the Impressionists did but with an oriental philosophy. Thus, as Masson says of this period of his work, he did not fear "the transparent, the vaporous, the exquisite, and their corollaries: suppleness, charm, vivacity." Despite the preponderance of these qualities in his work, subconscious subjects such as the abyss and the pomegranate (symbol of death) intrude; the motion of trees and wind reminiscent of previous dynamism and even an occasional automatic work also penetrate the refreshment of this new approach to painting from nature rather than from the subconscious.

37. Pins et rocs, wash, 1953

Masson's aim during this period was to plumb the possibilities of natural phenomena. In the past Masson had transformed light and color into adjuncts of his philosophical visions. At this time under the light of Provence and Venice, he saw what Monet ("the founder") had seen elsewhere but he painted it not so much technically as mystically, delicately, reverently. It was a fruitful period of mid-life calm and reflection.

38. Brume de printemps, oil, 1954

41. Labyrinthe animal, oil, 1956

Migrations of a Master

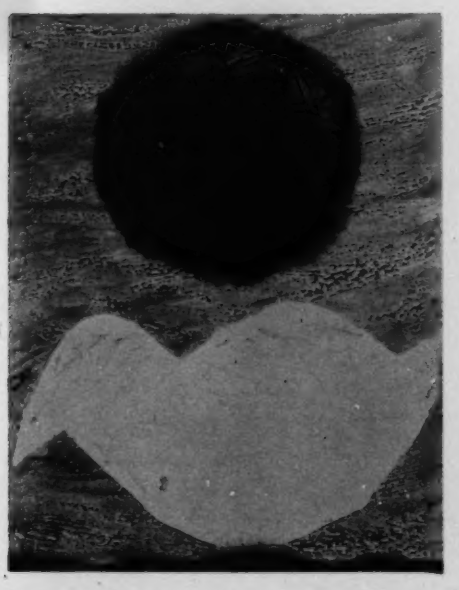
While Masson had been dealing extensively with the soft effects of light, including a brilliant series of black and color lithographs from 1949-53, conspicuously absent during this period was that contrary oriental influence seen in the American period—the rapid and agi-

39. Migration I, tempera, 1955

42. A la poursuite des oiseaux, sand, oil, tempera and feathers, 1958

tated calligraphic line. Masson returned to Paris and during a performance of the Pekin Opera sketched the dancers as calligraphic figures. After a number of drawings and prints employing figures which resemble literal calligraphy, Masson fused the technique into a new flowering of philosophical and imaginative works—migrations, devourings, the light of the seasons, flowerings, and prostitutes in the street—the *Féminaires*.

In these paintings, Masson used calligraphy to convey a movement over a solid structure of color forms. Masson does not, however, abandon old preoccupations but by this new inspiration pushes them into yet another meaningful configuration. Thus the painting *L'Abîme* (1955) represents many faces but each similar to the one which contemplated the abyss in 1943 (but now fallen into it), surrounded by a vertiginous mass of calligraphic forms suggesting both falling bodies and the fall itself. Paintings such as *La fin de l'été* recall themes from the American period dealing with seasonal color and light but in new forms rather than as restatements. In the *Dévoration* series, Masson renews his lifelong theme of the destiny of animals and creates an entirely new dimension. And in *Labyrinthe Animal* he combines the



Sommeil des cygnes, aquatint, 1958

Mines de Rien, aquatint, 1959

44. L'oracle I, oil and sand, 1959

idea of the devouring animal both at the heart of the labyrinth and as the labyrinth itself in a rich, colored maze of fused calligraphic strokes. These paintings are surely successful syntheses of philosophical and plastic development over a lifetime.

But concurrent with these syntheses, Masson also could start afresh with new themes. The *Migration* series particularly was a brilliant combination of calligraphic technique with a philosophical and emotional idea. Masson developed this theme varying its basic impetus of people with natural objects. The *Féminaires* are another example of the employment of the calligraphic figure for more than a plastic purpose. And it is this duality of Masson's paintings which from his early years has given his work a depth that sometimes diverts attention from his aesthetic but which ultimately must be the true source of its richness.

During this renaissance of the imaginary, Masson returned to experiments with sand painting. One technique he developed was a simple translation of his calligraphic line to sand, often over color. Masson applied the sand in such works with a virtually automatic motion, much more so than in the sand paintings of 1927 where line was applied over sand. While

Amours légendaires, etching, 1959

45. Métamorphose, ink and wash, 1960

46. Visage de l'ombre double, oil,1965

these sand paintings thus tend to be more automatic than the early ones, they are dedicated more to pure dynamics rather than to reflective ideas. A number of paintings, however, followed the pattern of the sand paintings of 1927.

Masson also explored a very complex technique which intensified those reflective tendencies of the early sand works. He built up layer after layer of colored sand to create a feeling of the earth, over which he then painted to give the effect of shadows, as in *L'ombre de l'herbe* and *A la poursuite des oiseaux,* or of a mystical interior action as in *Tumulus I.* But this technique was so complex that Masson did very few works, abandoning his plan to make a series of which *Tumulus I* was to be the first. These paintings are nevertheless among his richest because of the effects of light on their multicolored layers of sand.

After this intense period of new specific themes, pursued to the fullest, Masson embarked upon a period of more general explorations. In 1962 he characterized the new "compartments" of his work as Emblematic Places, Annals of Nature, and Mythical Figures, the last not so much in a Greek sense as in a mythology of Masson's own choosing. Within these general categories, Masson has allowed himself to wander freely rather than pursuing precisely

47. Corps en métamorphose, 1965

L'homme et son double, aquatint, 1964

48. Bacchanale au volcan, oil, 1965

conceived series as in the past. Nevertheless, this last decade has also served to allow him to culminate ideas and techniques that were never completely developed. *L'escalier de l'être* (1969) and *Le vainqueur de Méduse* (1973) are two paintings which resolve rather than repeat concepts found in suites of drawings of the late 1930s and 1940. Masson's ability to construct such cosmic themes, which are scattered through this last decade of his work, is demonstrably undiminished.

During these years, Masson has integrated his graphic and calligraphic directions with a fluid coloration which has provided him with a strong but generalized structure to accommodate his freedom in choosing themes. While this style is suited to his present aims, the components of this synthesis are visible throughout his work, which has always proceeded logically if complexly. In 1947-48, Masson actually arrived at one more or less calligraphic form of this integration in a few paintings, but perhaps because of his crisis at that time he waited until it would better serve him.

49. Les sauvages, oil, 1966

Masson has characteristically integrated his technique with his theme, and in the past this resulted in a constant progression which appears to those unfamiliar with his work as a shifting of technique. In actuality each new theme and its related plastic technique emerges from a preceding or former direction. The fact that Masson has sustained a technique for a decade reflects his generalized themes rather than a diminishing of the inventiveness of the past. Mas-

50. Oaristys II, oil, 1967

51. Le marché et les cariatides, oil, 1967

son still remains the painter whose goal it has always been to go forward. His mythical autobiography, a suite of twelve drawings made in 1967, ends with a masterpiece entitled: "The old man newly born seizes that which is without birth and regards that which is beyond time." The infinite has always beckoned André Masson, and at each period of his life he has always gone to meet it.

L. M. SAPHIRE

52. Le vainqueur de Méduse, oil, 1972-73

CATALOGUE

Paintings and Drawings

1. Carafe et poissons, oil, 1923, 16⅛x13″ (41x33cm), signed
2. Les poissons, oil, 1923, 15x21⅝″ (38x55cm), signed
3. Composition (Constellation), charcoal, 1926, 24⅞x19⅛″ (63x48, 5cm), signed
   Reproduced in Pia/Masson, NRF, 1930, p. 33
4. Automatic drawing, ink, 1925, 12½x8¼″ (31, 8x23, 5cm), signed
5. Automatic drawing, ink, 1926, 17x12⅜″ (43x31, 5cm), signed
6. Métamorphose, ink, 1927, 17¼x12⅜″ (43, 8x31, 5cm), signed, dated. Reproduced in Barrault, Bataille et al/Masson, 1940 (no publisher), p. 53
7. Automatic drawing, ink, 1927, 12¼x9¾″ (31x24, 7cm), initialed
8. Scène érotique, oil, 1928, 39⅜x31⅞″ (100x81cm), signed on reverse
9. Combat de poissons, ink, 1928, 12½x16¼″ (31, 7x41, 3cm), signed
10. Etude pour le Combat d'animaux, pastel on canvas, 1929, 13x21⅝″ (33x55cm), signed on reverse
11. Le faune, oil, 1932, 21⅝x18″ (55x46cm), initialed, dated
12. Massacre dans un champ, oil, 1933, 28¾x4511/16″ (73x116cm)
13. Orphée, oil, 1934, 15x11″ (38x28cm), initialed
14. Guadix, oil, 1934, 19 11/16x28¾″ (50x73cm), signed, dated
15. La nouvelle hostie, ink, 1936, 19 7/16x25 3/16″ (49, 4x64cm), signed, titled, dated. Reproduced in Barrault, Bataille et al/Masson, 1940 (no publisher), p. 95
16. Hurle à la vie, ink, 1939, 8⅝x6⅞″ (22x17,5cm), signed. Frontispiece for the poem by Léo Malet, Editions surréalistes, 1940
17. Le philosophe, ink, 1940, 20 1/16x14 9/16″ (51x37cm), signed, dated
18. Hôtel des oiseaux, oil, 1939, 31⅞x51¼″ (81x130cm), signed. Reproduced in Clébert/Masson, Pierre Cailler, 1971 (#116)
19. Le chiffre cinq, ink, 1940, 18¾x24½″ (47, 6x62, 2cm), signed. Reproduced in Masson/Anatomy of My Universe, Curt Valentin, 1943 (Plate III)
20. Le rêve d'Ariane, ink, 1941, 19⅝x25¾″ (49, 9x65, 4cm), signed, titled, dated
    Reproduced in Masson/Anatomy of My Universe, Curt Valentin, 1943 (Plate XXVII) and in Leiris, Limbour/André Masson et Son Univers, Editions des Trois Collines, 1947, p. 145.
21. Ville cranienne, watercolor, 1940, 19x25″ (48, 3x63, 5cm), signed, dated
22. Paysage en forme de poisson, oil, 1941, 14⅛x 18 1/16″ (36x46cm), signed
23. Capricio, ink, 1941, 24¾x18¾″ (47, 6x63cm), signed, dated, titled
24. Le couple, oil, 1941, 34½x14 11/16″ (87, 6x37, 3cm), signed

25. La défaite, ink, 1942, 14x9¾" (35, 6x24, 8cm), signed, dated
26. La veillée, ink, c. 1943, 8 5/16x7 7/16" (21, 3x19cm), signed. Reproduced in Masson/Nocturnal Notebook, Curt Valentin, 1944 (cover)
27. Tête penchée, ink, c. 1943, 7⅝x7½" (19, 4x19cm), signed
28. Divertissement, pastel, 1942, 19x25" (48x63, 5cm), signed, dated
29. Andromède, tempera and sand on canvas board, 1943, 12½x10" (31, 8x25, 4cm), signed
30. Le vieux soulier, brown and red wash, 1945, 19x25" (48x63, 5cm), signed, dated
31. L'enfant au livre d'images, oil, 1947, 26¾x22 1/16" (68x56cm), signed
32. Libation, oil, 1947, 18⅛x21 13/16" (46x55cm), signed
33. Voracité, oil, 1947, 39½x32" (100x81cm), signed, titled
34. La grotte, oil, 1948, 28¾x36¼" (73x92cm), signed
35. Herbes coupées, oil, 1948, 10½x18" (26, 7x45, 7cm), signed
36. L'idole, oil, 1948, 48x24" (120x60cm), signed

C'est les bottes de 7 lieues, etching, 1926

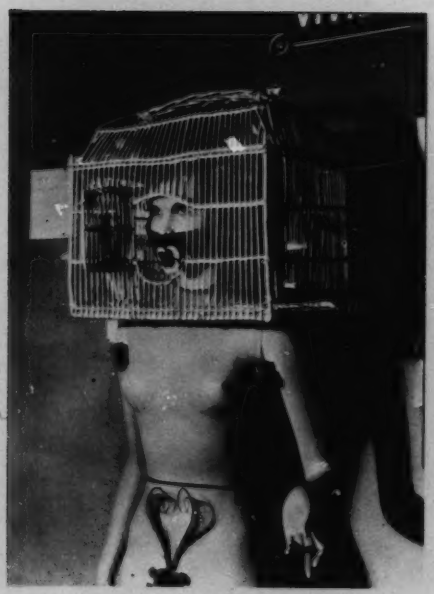
La pieuvre, etching, 1934

37. Pins et rocs, wash,1953, 25x18⅞" (63, 5x48cm), signed. Reproduced in Masson/Métamorphose de l'Artiste, Pierre Cailler, 1956 (opp. p. 32)
38. Brume de printemps, oil, 1954, 28¾x36¼" (73x92cm), signed
39. Migration I, tempera, 1955, 13x16⅛" (33x41cm), initialed , dated (priv. coll.)
40. Corps céleste, oil, 1956, 13x11⅝" (33x29cm), initialed
41. Labyrinthe animal, oil, 1956, 36¼x45¼" (92x115cm), signed
42. A la poursuite des oiseaux, sand, oil, tempera and feathers, 1958, 21⅝x18⅛" (55x46cm), signed
43. Migration aquatique, gouache, 1959, 19¾x25¾" (50x65, 5cm), signed
44. L'oracle I, oil and sand, 1959, 55⅛x45¾" (140x115cm), signed
45. Métamorphose, ink and wash, 1960, 12x9" (31, 5x23cm), signed
46. Visage de l'ombre double, oil,1965, 8⅝x10⅝" (22x27cm), signed
47. Corps en métamorphose, ink and watercolor, 1965, 14⅝x8½" (37,3x21,6cm), signed
48. Bacchanale au volcan, oil, 1965, 13x21⅝" (33x55cm), signed

Solidarité, etching, 1938

49. Les sauvages, oil, 1966, 19 11/16x24" (50x61cm), signed
50. Oaristys II, oil, 1967, 21⅝x18⅛" (55x46cm), signed
51. Le marché et les cariatides, oil, 1967, 32x39½" (81x100cm), signed
52. Le vainqueur de Méduse, oil, 1972-73, 28¾x23⅝" (73x60cm), signed

Dimensions are in height by width, in inches and centimeters. All works are reproduced with the exception of #40 and #43 and all are owned by Blue Moon Gallery and Lerner-Heller Gallery with the exception of #39. Only book references are cited, although many of the works have been exhibited in museums and galleries and appear in other catalogues.



Mannequin, 1938, International Surrealist Exhibition

Une remarque de Géricault, etching, 1946

Graphics

C'est les bottes de 7 lieues/Cette phrase "Je me vois": 4 etchings (3 in brown) illustrating the poems by Robert Desnos, Editions de la Galerie Simon, Paris 1926. (edition 110, signed by the author and artist)

Drame, drypoint, 1932, (edition 35, pulled in 1972)

L'homme au couteau, drypoint, 1933 (edition 40, pulled in 1972)

Orphée, etching, 1933 (edition 50, pulled in 1972)

Orphée, etching, 1933, contained in Sacrifices with a text by Georges Bataille, GLM, 1936 (edition approximately 60 contrary to the justification of 150)

Battements, etching, 1933, frontispiece for the poems of Thérèse Aubray, Cahiers libres, 1933 (edition 35; edition of 15 with wide margins pulled in 1972)

La pieuvre, etching, 1934, (edition 10)

Solidarité, etching, 1938, contained in the portfolio illustrating the poem by Paul Eluard, GLM, 1938 (edition 150)

L'oeuf cosmique, drypoint and aquatint, 1942 (edition 50, pulled in 1961 with aquatint added)

Le génie de l'espace, etching and drypoint, 1943 (edition 30, 15 in sanguine)

Portrait de l'artiste, litho, 1944 (edition 30)

Une remarque de Géricault, etching, 1946 (edition 50, pulled in 1972)

Sisyphe, aquatint and drypoint, 1946-47 (edition 20)

Homme et chrysalides, drypoint and aquatint, 1947 (edition 20)

Portrait de l'artiste I, aquatint and drypoint, 1946-47 (edition 50, pulled in 1972)

Portrait de l'artiste II, aquatint and drypoint, 1946-47 (edition 50, pulled in 1972)

La Camargue, litho in colors, 1949 (edition 75)

La grande montagne, litho, 1951 (edition 30)

L'oiseau cosmique, color aquatint, 1955 (edition 50)

L'oiseau et la plante, etching, 1958 (edition 50, pulled in 1972)

Sommeil des cygnes, aquatint, 1958 (edition 50)

Mines de Rien, aquatint, 1959, frontispiece for the poems by Robert Desnos, Broder, Paris, 1959 (edition 130; edition of 50 with large margins)

Amours légendaires, etching, 1959 (edition 30)

L'homme et son double, aquatint, 1964 (edition 30)

Rêve d'eau, drypoint, etching and aquatint in colors, 1967 (edition 50)

The Blue Moon Press will publish the complete catalogue of Masson's graphic work in four volumes: 1924-49; 1949-54; 1954-64; 1964 on. A more complete selection of Masson's graphic work will be shown in December following this exhibition.

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André Masson/Métamorphose de l'Artiste, Pierre Cailler Editeur, Geneva, 1956, Tomes I, II, Collection Ecrits et Documents de Peintres.

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This bibliography does not include many useful exhibition catalogues or books which are illustrated by André Masson.

L'oiseau cosmique, color aquatint, 1955

ANDRÉ MASSON

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